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Hurricane Response:

1 — Residents near Houston superfund site await answers after Hurricane Harvey, Houston Chronicle, 9/21/17
<http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/hurricaneharvey/article/Residents-near-Houston-superfund-site-await-12218123.php?ipid=hpctp>

Hundreds of families in riverfront neighborhoods east of Houston fear that massive flooding has poisoned their land and fouled their wells with sewage, industrial pollution and toxic sediment from the region's most notorious Superfund site - the San Jacinto Waste pits.

2 — Parts of Houston under flood advisory as rain continues, Houston Chronicle, 9/21/17
<http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/article/Scattered-showers-thunderstorms-to-hit-Houston-12217441.php?ipid=happening>

Up to 3 inches of rain per hour is falling on some parts of Houston Thursday, deluges reminiscent of Monday's showers. A flood advisory is in place until 2 p.m. for central Brazoria County. Another was just lifted on portions of east Harris County including Pasadena, Baytown, La Porte and Deer Park.

3 — Homeowners join lawsuit against Crosby chemical plant that burned after Hurricane Harvey, Texas Tribune, 9/20/17
<https://www.texastribune.org/2017/09/20/homeowners-join-lawsuit-against-chemical-plant-fire/>

Eleven plaintiffs and a new defendant were added Wednesday to a lawsuit against Arkema Inc., an international chemical company whose plant near Houston spewed clouds of smoke from a series of chemical fires earlier this month after it was inundated by six feet of floodwaters from Hurricane Harvey.

4 — Paul Ryan, GOP leaders tour, survey areas impacted by Harvey, KHOU, 9/21/17
<http://www.khou.com/weather/harvey/paul-ryan-gop-leaders-tour-survey-areas-impacted-by-harvey-1/477600171>
House Speaker Paul Ryan and GOP leaders, including Sens. Ted Cruz and John Cornyn were in town touring Hurricane Harvey damage. They landed at Ellington Field Thursday morning, where they were briefed on recovery efforts.

5 — Report: Houston Fire Department has inadequate equipment to handle floods, KPRC, 9/21/17
<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/local/gray-matters/article/Kept-waiting-Kashmere-Garden-helps-itself-after-12215726.php>
A City of Houston Hurricane Harvey Preparation Plan, obtained by Channel 2 Investigates, shows the Houston Fire Department has shockingly little flood rescue equipment, and it appears to have contributed to millions of dollars in losses for the city in totaled fire trucks.

Chron <http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/hurricaneharvey/article/Residents-near-Houston-superfund-site-await-12218123.php>

Residents near Houston superfund site await answers after Hurricane Harvey

Did violent flooding poison land and water in San Jacinto river neighborhoods?

By **Lise Olsen** Published 12:21 pm, Thursday, September 21, 2017



Hundreds of families in riverfront neighborhoods are worried that massive flooding has pushed sewage, industrial pollution and other contaminants from a notorious Superfund site -

h

The San Jacinto River floods unleashed by the remnants of Hurricane Harvey crashed through Channelview, destroying dozens of homes in the Channelview riverfront neighborhood next to the pits and demolished two low-lying subdivisions in Highlands.

Now Playing: San Jacinto Waste pits after Hurricane Harvey

Some Channelview river bottom homes washed away entirely. Others lost their roofs and were pushed off foundations. A few ruins now teeter on the brink of sink holes that now pockmark the neighborhood, called San Jacinto River Estates, that's built around a county park and a private marina.



IMAGE 1 OF 16

Linda Bonner, 71, embraces her granddaughter Gaige-Lyn Gray in front of her home in Channelview, about a mile away from the San Jacinto Waste pits and destroyed by Hurricane Harvey. She does not plan to ... [more](#)

Linda Bonner, 71, shuffles in black tennis shoes through the silt to a jagged hole where her front porch, dining room and bedroom used to be. Bonner bought her place in 1978 - unaware of old paper mill dump sites on the riverbanks behind it - and raised seven children here. She rebuilt after the 1994 floods and again after Hurricane Ike, but says Harvey "was the worst."

Her home now slants, half in and half out of a sandy 6-foot deep hole. It's stuck, which is much the same that Bonner has felt since 2008, when the federal government first declared the waste pits worthy of national Superfund status because of the cancer-causing dioxins and other poisons they contain.

"The Superfund site sits not a mile from here, but if you don't have anywhere to go what do you do? You live with it," she said. "But now I'm done. ... And when I leave, I'm going to throw away these shoes too."

Bonner and others in Channelview, Baytown and Highlands neighborhoods along this Houston dam worry about the toxicity of murky water, white dust and the foul-smelling

RELATED: Activists demand answers about Harvey's impact on San Jacinto Rive

The question for dozens of people, who a week after the storm still guard wrecked river scrap, is whether their neighborhoods are now too contaminated to recover - and who possesses. And no one seems to be giving them any answers.

Now Playing: San Jacinto Waste pits after Hurricane Harvey

The San Jacinto pits are among 13 of 60 state and federal Superfund sites in Texas that were flooded and potentially damaged in Hurricane Harvey. Of these sites, only two federal sites - San Jacinto and U.S. Oil Recovery - require additional assessment efforts, the EPA says.

Few sites are as vulnerable to the elements as the waste pits. For years, paper mill wastes containing cancer-causing dioxin were stored along the western river banks, which later became partially submerged as the river changed course.

Nearly a month later, residents and activists continue to push federal officials and ask researchers for assistance.

Related:

Read the rest of the story [here](#).

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<http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/article/Scattered-showers-thunderstorms-to-hit-Houston-12217441.php>

Parts of Houston under flood advisory as rain continues

By **Margaret Kadifa** Updated 1:20 pm, Thursday, September 21, 2017

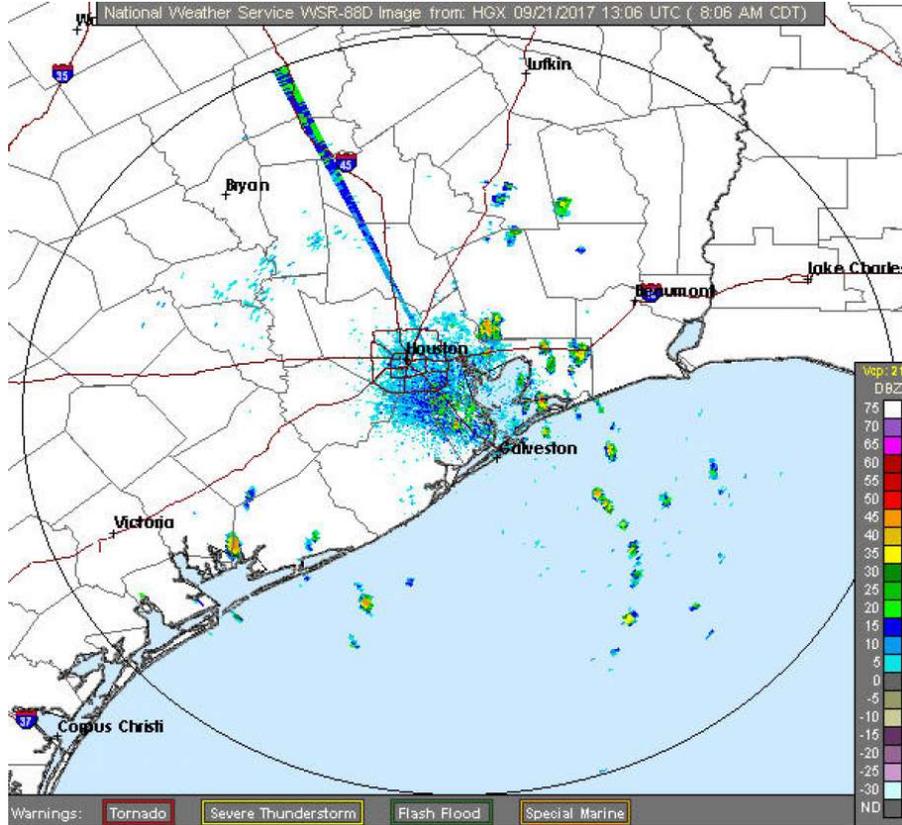


IMAGE 1 OF 32

A screenshot of an HGX Radar image of the Greater Houston area on Sept. 21, 2017.

Up to 3 inches of rain per hour is falling on some parts of Houston Thursday, deluges reminiscent of Monday's showers.

A flood advisory is in place until 2 p.m. for central Brazoria County. Another was just lifted on portions of east Harris County including Pasadena, Baytown, La Porte and Deer Park.

Two inches of rain had already fallen in the area by 1 p.m. Some spots received one-third an inch every five minutes, according to the National Weather Service.

Increased moisture from the Gulf caused scattered showers and thunderstorms to form Thursday morning, according to the NWS. The storms are expected to head northward and continue throughout the afternoon.

Just before 1 p.m., they were moving northward at about 25 mph, said NWS meteorologist Patrick Blood.

READ ALSO: [Houston FEMA flood map was way off, new study says](#)

But Houstonians shouldn't be too alarmed, Blood added.

"We're not anticipating any flash flooding, water in homes or car rescues," Blood said. "We are expecting the typical feeder flooding or street flooding."

Most of Houston will likely only get about a quarter to a half-inch of rain, according to the NWS.

However, Thursday afternoon the areas along and south of Interstate 10 could see some heavy rainfall similar to that in east Harris County.

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Homeowners join lawsuit against Crosby chemical plant that burned after Hurricane Harvey

Eleven additional plaintiffs and a new defendant have been added to a lawsuit against the company whose manufacturing plant experienced a series of chemical fires as a result of floodwaters from Hurricane Harvey.

BY **EMMA PLATOFF** SEPT. 20, 2017 19 HOURS AGO



The Arkema plant in Crosby, Texas is covered in debris after a series of chemical fires that occurred as a result of floodwaters from Hurricane Harvey.

 Chemical Safety Board

Eleven plaintiffs and a new defendant were added Wednesday to a [lawsuit](#) against Arkema Inc., an international chemical company whose plant near Houston spewed clouds of smoke from a series of chemical fires earlier this month after it was inundated by six feet of floodwaters from Hurricane Harvey.

The updated [lawsuit](#) alleges that Arkema and the new defendant, Bureau Veritas — an air quality monitoring company that Arkema contracted to conduct testing in the vicinity of the plant — failed to properly advise first responders and neighbors about the dangers of fumes from the fires, which spewed black smoke high above the plant in Crosby.

The lawsuit, originally filed Sept. 7 with seven first responders listed as plaintiffs, has since swelled to include six additional first responders as well as a slate of area homeowners who claim that in addition to property damage related to the fires, they suffered “upper respiratory infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, itchy, burning eyes, tight, burning throats and the like — illnesses and injuries that did not exist prior to the explosions and fires at the Arkema facility and illnesses resulting from and exacerbated by the explosions and fire at the Arkema facility.”

Medical personnel and police officers called to the first fire in the early hours of Aug. 31 “began to fall ill in the middle of the road,” and were “doubled over vomiting, unable to breathe,” the lawsuit claims.

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Plaintiffs are seeking more than \$1 million in damages, the suit says.

Bureau Veritas declined to comment Wednesday afternoon. Arkema said earlier this month that it would “vigorously defend a lawsuit that we believe is gravely mistaken.”

Officials have compared smoke from the thousands of pounds of burning organic peroxides to what emerges from a campfire or barbecue and maintained that it was a “[non-toxic irritant](#).” The Environmental Protection Agency [said earlier this month](#) that “surface level water runoff results were less than the screening levels that would warrant further investigation” and air testing “found no exceedances” of required levels.

But the lawsuit criticizes company executives for “repeatedly [denying] that the chemicals were toxic or harmful in any manner ... Plaintiffs relied upon these representations and suffered serious bodily injuries as a result,” the suit says.

The fires started in the wake of Hurricane Harvey, whose floodwaters took out the plant's primary and backup sources of power. Without refrigeration, organic peroxides in the plant began to degrade, culminating in a series of explosions beginning Aug. 31 and continuing over the next several days.

Residents within a 1.5 mile radius of the plant were evacuated for a week while the chemicals burned. When they returned to their homes, they were advised to wear protective clothing and drink bottled water.

Read related Tribune coverage:

- Arkema Inc. said the Harris County Emergency Operations Center notified the company at 2 a.m. Thursday of explosions and black smoke coming from its Crosby plant, which was inundated by Hurricane Harvey's floodwaters. [[Full story](#)]
- When first responders were sent to the scene of a chemical fire at a manufacturing plant last week, they were never alerted to the toxic fumes in the air, a new lawsuit alleges. And the plant's parent company could face another lawsuit in the next several weeks. [[Full story](#)]
- After explosions in a Crosby chemical plant, the public had no option but to trust government and company assurances that billowing smoke presented little danger. [[Full story](#)]

REFERENCE MATERIAL



Amended Arkema lawsuit — Sept. 20, 2017
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Paul Ryan, GOP leaders tour, survey areas impacted by

Michelle Choi, KHOU 1:06 PM. CDT September 21, 2017



HOUSTON – House Speaker Paul Ryan and GOP leaders, including Sens. Ted Cruz and John Cornyn were in town touring Hurricane Harvey damage.

They landed at Ellington Field Thursday morning, where they were briefed on recovery efforts.

After that they came out to a Friendswood neighborhood hit hard by Harvey to help residents clean up their damaged homes.

FEMA says 787,000 people have registered with them just here in Texas alone.

Right now, their three main priorities are to clean up debris, find housing for Harvey victims, and get essential services and school back up and running again.

According to the U.S. Coast Guard, federal first responders from multiple agencies helped save more than 100,000 people across Texas.

The Army Corps of Engineers said they're looking into how to prevent future flooding right now, but when asked by the GOP leaders if building more reservoirs might be an option, they said not at this time.

The Harris County Flood Control District also spoke saying Harris County is the third most populous county in the U.S. and that flooding is our biggest threat.

A solution would be to buyout homes – asking for funds from FEMA to do that. So far, 3,000 homeowners in Houston have asked for buyouts.

Ryan and Republican lawmakers later went up in U.S. Coast Guard choppers for about 40 minutes to do an aerial survey of the damage, focusing on infrastructure projects, both current and proposed.

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INVESTIGATES [[HTTPS://WWW.CLICK2HOUSTON.COM/NEWS/INVESTIGATES](https://www.click2houston.com/news/investigates)]

Report: Houston Fire Department has inadequate equipment to handle floods

Channel 2 obtains City of Houston Hurricane Harvey Preparation Plan

By Joel Eisenbaum [<https://www.click2houston.com/author/joeleisenbaum>] - Investigative Reporter

Posted: 10:05 PM, September 18, 2017

Updated: 12:02 PM, September 19, 2017

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HOUSTON [<https://www.click2houston.com/topic/Houston?entityid=48694&lang=en>] - A City of Houston Hurricane Harvey Preparation Plan, obtained by Channel 2 Investigates, shows the Houston Fire Department has shockingly little flood rescue equipment, and it appears to have contributed to millions of dollars in losses for the city in totaled fire trucks.

"The reason I think we sank six engine companies is (that) they're not built for a high-water environment," said Houston Fire Chief Sam Pena [[https://www.click2houston.com/topic/Sam Pena?entityid=509163129&lang=en](https://www.click2houston.com/topic/Sam%20Pena?entityid=509163129&lang=en)].

The Houston Fire Department lost 28 pieces of equipment during the storm, including six engines, which cost about \$500,000 each to replace. Four "boosters," smaller trucks with on-board water supplies, are also total losses.

In a city of 2.3 million people that floods regularly, the Houston Fire Department only owns one high-water vehicle.

"The one high-water vehicle that the department maintains was not operational when it was delivered to the station," said Patrick Lancton, president of the Houston Firefighters Association. "There were mechanical problems with it."

An enterprising assistant chief was able to hand-deliver a specialized mechanic to get the truck running so that it was available just before the brunt of the storm hit.

Rescue boats, or a lack thereof, present another major problem.

The Houston Fire Department owned only six rescue boats going into Harvey -- and that number is now five, because one was lost in the storm.

"We don't even have enough specialized equipment for the expected floods," Pena said.

Pena said he is unable to position rescue boats in the normally expected flooded areas of Houston, because there are simply not enough to go around.

He surmised that 16 rescue boats would be adequate for that job; that's 11 more than the department currently has.

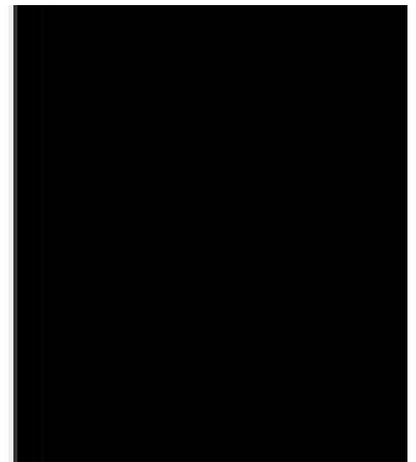
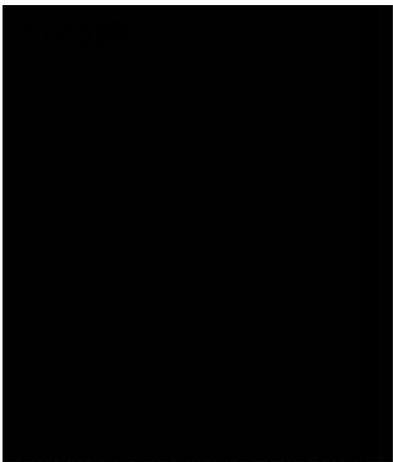
These issues come on the heels of an **earlier Channel 2 Investigates report** [<https://www.click2houston.com/news/investigates/houston-fire-department-fire-truck-fleet-reaching-critical-state-chief-says>] that shows Houston Fire Department fire trucks and ambulances have broken down on the way to emergencies, and not functioned properly when they're needed most.

Just before the storm, a 15-year-old boy died a day after a Fire Department ambulance broke down two blocks from Texas Children's Hospital.

Paramedics were forced to rush the teen, who had a pre-existing heart condition, to the hospital on foot.

It is unclear if the delay played a role in Roynal Gallow's death. His family and friends have **started a GoFund Me effort**. [<https://www.gofundme.com/roynal>]

"That's a situation we don't want to find ourselves in," Pena said.



Hurricane Harvey COH Plan
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